**Beating Stress!**

Try taking these five steps the next time you are stressed:

1. **Get support.** When you need help, reach out to the people who care about you. [Talk](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/thought/talk_feelings.html) to a trusted adult, such as a parent, other relative, a school counselor, or a coach. And don't forget about your friends. They might be worried about the same test or have had similar problems, such as dealing with a [divorce](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/home_family/divorce.html) or the death of a beloved [pet](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/thought/pet_death.html).
2. **Don't freak out!** It's easy to let your feelings go wild when you're upset. Notice your feelings, and name them — for example, "I am so [angry](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/anger.html)!" And say or think about why you feel that way. Then, find a way to calm down and get past the upset feelings and find a way to express them. Do breathing exercises, listen to music, write in a journal, play with a pet, go for a walk or a bike ride, or do whatever helps you shift to a better mood.
3. **Don't take it out on yourself.** Sometimes when kids are stressed and upset they take it out on themselves. Oh, dear, that's not a good idea. Remember that there are always people to help you. Don't take it out on yourself. Be kind to yourself and ask for the helping hand or pat on the back that you need — and deserve — to get you through the tough situation you're facing.
4. **Try to solve the problem.** After you're calm and you have support from adults and friends, it's time to get down to business. You need to figure out what the problem is. Even if you can't solve all of it, maybe you can begin by solving a piece of it.
5. **Be positive — most stress is temporary.** It may not seem like it when you're in the middle a stressful situation, but stress does go away, often when you figure out the problem and start working on solving it.

These five steps aren't magic — and you might have to do some steps more than once, but they **do** work. And if you can stay positive as you make your way through a tough time, you'll help yourself feel better even faster. Ah . . . it feels so good when the stress is gone!

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